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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 002357

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2013

TAGS: ASEC EPET PINR NI CACS

SUBJECT: AMCITS NOT/NOT TAKEN HOSTAGE IN DELTA - CHEVRON

USES NEW STRATEGY

Classified By: J GREGOIRE FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (C)

¶1. (C) Chevron's special security manager, Hamish Macdonald (sic), told Econoff on November 14 that no Americans were taken hostage in an incident earlier this week. Press reports indicate that four barges and 21 Chevron contractors were seized by Ijaw youths in the riverine area near Warri on November 11. The hostages and barges were reported to have been released the following day.

¶2. (C) Macdonald said that all the kidnapped contractors were Nigerian, and that Chevron was able to secure their release shortly after the company was made aware of their capture. He said that while the barges were retrieved, equipment and foodstuffs onboard had been pilfered and vandalized.

¶3. (C) Macdonald further told Econoff that Chevron employed a new strategy in dealing with the incident that should prove a successful model for similar incidents and for ongoing negotiations with communities for access to and safety of oil installations in the Delta swamps. Macdonald was reluctant to go into detail via mobile phone, but he said the company used the Delta State Security Council to secure the release of the hostages and barges. He said that unlike previous incidents, the Council was effective this week because it convened key community leaders and traditional rulers that held sway with the youths involved.

¶4. (C) Macdonald said Chevron paid no money and made no promises for return of the kidnapped personnel and stolen barges; he said "this was handled the right way, and the way we all should handle community relations." He said he was encouraged by the prospect of using the new strategy to help return Chevron to its onshore fields in the Delta. Macdonald offered to meet Econoff in person next week to discuss the steps taken in this incident.

HINSON-JONES